

**Hawkins County Schools**  
**Foundational Literacy Skills Plan**  
**Approved: May 18, 2021**

This Foundational Literacy Skills Plan has been approved by the Tennessee Department of Education and meets the requirements of the *Tennessee Literacy Success Act*. All portions of the Foundational Literacy Skills plan were submitted to the department and approved. To view the supplemental artifacts, please contact the district directly.

**Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades K-2**

Hawkins County School District is using a foundational skills curriculum through Benchmark Advance 2021 that is ingrained with our Tennessee State ELA standards as approved by the state Textbook and Instructional Materials Quality Commission. Benchmark Advance 2021 uses systematic explicit instruction, spiral review, and authentic reading and writing activities with lessons that are research based. The ELA block is a specified 150 minutes including a 90 minute block of uninterrupted instruction. Each day foundational skills are taught explicitly for 60-80 minutes of instruction and interwoven throughout read alouds, grade level texts, literacy center activities and writing instruction during the remaining ELA block in K-2. The instructional time includes lessons and activities that augment phonological awareness, phonics modeling and practice, encoding practice, high frequency word practice and fluency practice as well as building background knowledge, comprehension, word meanings, and writing skills. Lessons include teacher modeling sounds, students practicing sounds, students using spelling-sound correspondences with practice, students blending sounds with practice and then students moving to independently using sounds, letters, and words in their reading and writing. Lessons also include built-in repetition and review of skills taught in the previous 4-6 weeks.

A sample lesson from the first nine weeks of first grade includes students knowing how to decode and encode r-blends including br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, and tr. Students move from hearing the blend sounds, to writing the letter representation of the blend, to writing a whole word with the r-blend, and then applying that skill within their decodable reading texts and writing tasks.

Looking ahead to our next year of implementation of our foundational skills curriculum, further training in our curriculum as well as in the science of reading to expand our instructional knowledge base is needed to further improve our classroom practice. Also more work is warranted in small group time during literacy centers with quality practice activities which support our foundational skills.

**Daily Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction in Grades 3-5**

Hawkins County School District secures a 120 minute holistic literacy block for students in grades third through fifth. The literacy instruction is aligned to Tennessee's academic ELA standards. Our adopted curriculum, Benchmark Advance 2021, is approved by the State Textbook and Instructional

Materials Quality Commission and meets the literacy requirements set by the State Board of Education. The vertical and horizontal alignment that exists within the curriculum (10 topic-based three week units per grade) creates opportunities for deeper knowledge-building and strengthening vocabulary over time. Questions, tasks, and texts promote students' learning in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. Using an evidence-based approach, students frequently practice and apply foundational skills within the daily lessons through the ELA block. Predictable routines and spiraling strategies are in place to provide effective use of the instructional time. Throughout the district, students spend a minimum of 60 minutes per day engaged in work around close reading, analyzing, and comprehending complex texts. Texts are high-quality, appropriately rigorous, and include genres that build content knowledge and vocabulary in science, social studies, and literature. Students engage in group discussions and cite text evidence as they apply their knowledge through a repetitive cycle of listening, reading, writing, thinking, and speaking. For at least 30 minutes per day, students are emerged in foundational skills instruction that includes fluency, morphology, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and writing. Students have multiple opportunities to practice, apply, and transfer foundational skills as fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are embedded and taught simultaneously to ensure coherence and connection.

For example, our third grade students recently completed a unit on weather and climate. Students read a variety of complex texts including a poem about clouds. The lesson began by activating students' prior experiences with identifying the central message. Students were reminded that often the central message of a poem is communicated by the language and details the author uses. Students chorally read stanza 1 together. The teacher instructed the students to highlight the vocabulary word "encircle." The teacher modeled using our curriculum's Reading Big Words Strategy and knowledge of hard and soft c to decode the word. The students repeated the word, spelled the word, and used context clues to define the word. Students highlighted several other vocabulary words and used their knowledge of hard and soft c to decode each one. Then, students independently read and annotated the remaining stanzas of grade-level poem, making sure to highlight specific words and phrases that helped them determine the central message. Afterwards, students were paired to practice their fluency by rereading the poem together. In addition, students discussed their thinking about the message that the author was conveying. After a constructive conversation, students transferred their thinking into a written response that was supported by textual evidence. As in this spotlighted lesson, foundational skills are embedded throughout the ELA block as fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are integrated throughout the lessons.

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades K-2**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

### **Approved Instructional Materials for Grades 3-5**

Benchmark - K-5 Advance

**Universal Reading Screener for Grades K-5. This screener complies with RTI<sup>2</sup> and Say Dyslexia requirements.**

Hawkins County Schools uses aimswebPlus as the universal screener. AimswebPlus is listed in the TN RTI2 Manual as one of the universal screeners that meets the criteria of the state for universal screening and progress monitoring.

Students are screened at the beginning, middle and end of each year.

Additionally, AimswebPlus meets the requirements of a screener that helps identify students with characteristics of dyslexia. It is a skills based, nationally norm referenced assessment of basic reading, reading fluency, and comprehension.

We may opt into using the TN Universal Reading Screener after we have had an opportunity to analyze and make an informed decision.

**Intervention Structure and Supports**

Hawkins County Schools has a district RTI2 plan aligned with the TN Framework for RTI2 to support “at risk” students. The District RTI2 Coordinator supports individual schools with implementation of the district plan by providing interventionist training, individual school support as needed, and support at school-level 4.5 Week Data Meetings. Assistance also includes support at special education S-Team meetings, review of new intervention programs, and facilitation of District RTI2 Committee meetings.

The District RTI2 Committee composed of the district coordinator, supervisors, special education consultants, academic coaches and school psychologists meet three times per year to facilitate district support of our district RTI2 plan.

Each elementary school in Hawkins County Schools employs a school interventionist. This certified teacher facilitates universal screening, progress monitoring, data meetings, documentation of individual student intervention plans, survey assessments, diagnostic assessments and teaches Tier III RTI2 groups. Tier II groups are taught by certified teachers and educational assistants who have been trained to teach intervention programs. Principals complete fidelity checks each semester based on the requirements in the TN RTI2 manual.

After universal screening, school interventionists schedule Initial Data Meetings, which include classroom teachers, speech teachers, guidance counselors, principals, etc. to determine those students who are “at risk” of a significant reading deficiency. They facilitate placement of students in intervention tiers, assign a research-based program to address the specific gaps of the students and set a progress-monitoring schedule.

Placement in intervention is determined by analysis of AimswebPlus data, classroom data, teacher observations, and TCAP data. Generally, students who score between the 11th-25th percentile are placed in Tier II for thirty minutes of daily instruction and are progress monitored every other week. Students who score between the 1st-10th percentile are placed in Tier III where they receive 45 minutes of daily instruction and progress monitoring every week. All intervention students receive instruction in a research-based program that addresses his/her specific learning gaps. (Tier II –

Voyager, 95% Group Phonics, Sidewalks Intervention, QuickReads, Read Live, Tier III- Sounds Sensible/SPIRE, Stepping Stones to Literacy, Sound Partners and Sunday.) Parents receive a letter to inform them of their child's placement in RTI2.

School data teams meet every 4.5 weeks to look at progress monitoring data and rate of improvement (ROI). A reasonable goal is set in aimswebPlus based on ROI calculation to indicate whether the student is making adequate progress. The ROI for Tier II and Tier III students are set greater than the expected progress of a typical peer in order to close the gap as required by the TN RTI2 Manual. If the student is not making adequate progress, the team may decide to continue the current plan to give more time for progress; change tiers; make a change in duration, program or intensity; or recommend a special education referral. As students make progress, the team will move them to a higher tier until they reach Tier 1. Parents receive notification of any changes and a graph showing student progress after every 4.5 meeting.

### **Parent Notification Plan/Home Literacy Reports**

After the Fall aimswebPlus benchmark, parents receive a letter informing them that their child will take the aimswebPlus screener assessment three times per year in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. The student national percentile scores for Reading and Math are shared along with a chart showing the percentile ranges for each level of achievement (well below average, below average, average, above average and well above average). Parents can easily look to see how their child is scoring on a grade-level assessment and understand the level of success or difficulty their student is experiencing. This notification also informs parents of K-3 students about the importance of reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade. Notification will be sent if a K-5 student is not scoring above the 25th percentile, they will receive another letter informing them about Reading or Math intervention for their child. Both letters include a list of no-cost ways parents can support their child at home.

At the school Initial Data Meeting, students are recommended for RTI2 classes. The data team completes an intervention plan that documents the tier, research-based program placement, interventionist and progress-monitoring schedule for each recommended student. Close analysis of the benchmark assessment, survey level assessment and diagnostic data help to identify the deficit area and instructional level for intervention. These parents receive a second letter to inform them of the students' specific deficits in Reading and/or Math and how they will be addressed in intervention classes. This letter lets the parent know the tier placement, number of minutes the students will spend in a daily intervention class, and frequency of progress monitoring. The letter also states that parents will receive student progress reports after each 4.5-week data meeting.

After each school's 4.5 Week Data Meeting, parents receive a progress report that includes a graph of progress monitoring points and a parent letter stating that the student is/is not making adequate progress to close the learning gap. Any changes in the intervention plan: change of tiers, program, amount of time, or interventionist, are also included in this letter.

After interventionists have worked with students in RTI2 classes, and suspect that a student is showing characteristics of dyslexia, a "Say Dyslexia" letter is sent to the parent providing them with information about dyslexia and a list of resources available to them. The student is placed in a

dyslexia –specific intervention. Parents are informed of their progress in the letters that go home after 4.5 week meetings.

### **Professional Development Plan**

Summer of 2020 focused on training in our adopted ELA series Benchmark Advance 2021. This program was adopted for Kindergarten through Fifth Grade.

Teachers in our district will participate in the free and optional Reading 360 Early Literacy Training series developed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Our plan for providing PD for all K-5 teachers is as follows:

April 2021 - PreK-5 teachers have registered for the asynchronous week of Foundational Skills Training. We currently have 158 teachers and leaders registered to participate in this training. Our district will host four weeks of the training this summer. This training will focus on foundational reading development and instruction and is grounded in a phonics-based approach. We will ensure that participating educators earn a completion certificate prior to starting Week 2 work in June.

June and July 2021 – Our district has registered for the cohort-based, in-person training offered as Week 2 of the Early Literacy Training series for teachers in grades Pre-K through fifth. The participating teachers will also include interventionists and those teachers who support intervention, special education teachers, elementary instructional coaches, ESL teachers and school leaders. This week will emphasize practical classroom application of research findings around strong instruction in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and vocabulary.

June and July 2021 - Teachers have the opportunity to register for foundational skills supplemental training provided by Benchmark Advance 2021.

The courses are:

Exploring Foundation Skills for ELA (Gr K-2)

Supporting Reading Mini-Lessons & Collaborative Conversations (Gr 3-5)

Exploring Small Group Lesson Instruction (Gr K-5)

Those who are unable to attend the Early Literacy Training this summer because of prior commitments will be attending during the summer of 2022.